

Unambiguous

By: Jay Kruse, Adapted From *The Giver* by Louis Lowry

Hunger clawed at their stomachs as Jonas biked, or rather, tried to bike. The ground seemed to rise up out of the earth. He regained the faint perception of what it was. *Hill* he recalled.

“Hill,” he whispered to Gabe, in a voice that was near giving up. The hunger, the thirst and the unbearable cold. He was at his limit. White powder began to drift downward and fell on Gabriel’s face. He let out a pitiful giggle. Jonas’ tense muscles softened a bit at his laugh. Jonas found pedaling through the pooling powder to be even more challenging than anticipated. He gritted his teeth and tried with everything he had to get one more foot. But he didn’t make it. The bike fell sideways into the oddly cushioning material. Jonas picked Gabe up from the buried seat and held him close. Gabe looked at Jonas and his pale eyes lit up at the sight of his big brother. Jonas had to keep trying. For the sweet little newchild he *loved*. And he knew he loved him. He forced himself up onto his knees. Jonas staggered and fell, got up and fell again. But he kept going. The cold cut through his feeble tunic. Red. It was red. He smiled. Hunger ravaged him, the only things he could still feel were his rumbling stomach and Gabe, a constant weight on his chest.

All of the sudden he felt his mind slip from him. And then there was war. But it felt so real, not like the memories he had received, this was so much closer. Among the corpses was an elephant, pierced through the heart. He heard the mournful bellow of its friend reverberate through him. Jonas tried to run, but his leg was splintered. Resting, twisted, on a sled. Red. It was red. He screamed. His mind twisted until he was in the Release Room, he clamped his eyes closed as his father murdered a child with a smile. He looked down and Gabe was gone. Frantic, he turned around and saw him being forcefully grabbed by soldiers. Jonas ignored the excruciating pain in his leg and ran after him. Gabe reached his tiny hand out and his eyes filled with tears. Jonas tried to grab him but wasn’t fast enough. A steel door closed. Jonas lay on the floor of a concrete box. He was so alone. He writhed on the floor. Remembering. He didn’t have courage. He didn’t have strength. He was just done.

Then something changed. He sat up and was on the edge of a boat. Gabe was resting by his side. They gently rocked back and forth with the surf. Jonas breathed in the salty air with relief. It was over. He gazed into the sea and saw a little girl hugging her mother after a long time apart. He saw a young man opening his eyes, he was revitalized from a thousand different beeping machines and people. They all celebrated and embraced him. And he smiled. He saw a beautiful rainbow over a mountain. He

came to the abrupt conclusion that none of this beauty could be created without pain. The little girl would never be so happy to see her mother if they had not been separated. The young man would never be saved if he was never sick. The rainbow would be gone without the rain. Gabe stirred and came up to him. He wrapped his chubby arms around Jonas's neck and buried his head into his shirt. Jonas squeezed him tight. A sweet song echoed around him. Far away, The Giver's eyes filled with tears as he raised his hand and said, almost too soft to hear.

"It's done."

Jonas heard. And he and Gabe were sitting on a sled. He pushed off and began the descent. He laughed into the wind. It was bittersweet. As they reached the bottom Jonas lay back into the *snow*. He could feel it leave. But it was ok. Gabe lay limp beside him, a soft little smile still etched into his face. It was a strange kind of etterath, he wondered if he would do it all again. Jonas grew very warm at the end. He had made the right choice. It was all ok. Because before his pale eyes grew dim, Jonas had, he felt the word for it, *lived*.